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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 on the institutional arrangements to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to set up a high-level Commission on Sustainable Development, adopted a number of recommendations related to the relationship of this Commission with other United Nations intergovernmental bodies, coordination within the United Nations system, the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development, secretariat support arrangements, and other institutional modalities to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and effectively implement its decisions, and requested the Security Council to report to it at its forty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The Assembly also adopted a number of other resolutions, with institutional implications, related to the Conference follow-up, including resolution 47/188, in which the Assembly established an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification problems, particularly in Africa (see A/48/226 and Add.1); resolution 47/189 on the convening of a global conference on the sustainable development of small island developing States (see A/48/36); resolution 47/192 on the convening of a United Nations conference on straddling and highly migratory fish stocks (see A/48/479); and resolution 47/195 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind.

II. COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3. The Commission on Sustainable Development was established by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1993/207. The Council also decided on the procedural arrangements for the Commission, which supplemented the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Council.

4. In 1993 the Commission on Sustainable Development held an organizational session from 24 to 26 February and a substantive session from 14 to 25 June. The decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the Commission (E/1993/25 and Add.1) were subsequently endorsed by the Council in its decision 1993/314. In accordance with paragraph 3 (i) of General Assembly resolution 47/191, the report of the Commission containing its recommendations is brought to the attention of the Assembly.

5. Recommendations of the Commission, which call for particular action on the part of the General Assembly (see E/1993/25/Add.1) are listed below:

(a) In paragraph 12 of its report, the Commission, bearing in mind its functions, in particular those contained in paragraph 3 (a) and (i) of Assembly resolution 47/191, requested the Council and, through it, the Assembly to decide on the arrangements required so that the relevant reports or parts thereof of their subsidiary bodies dealing with issues related to sustainable development would be made available to the Commission;

(b) In paragraph 35 of its report, the Commission invited the Council and, through it, the Assembly, to analyse and review, in the context of the ongoing process of revitalization and restructuring in the economic, social and related fields, the functioning of the intergovernmental machinery in relation to the implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference, with a view to making it more responsive to these tasks, as well as to improving the complementarity in the work of their subsidiary organs, and making compatible their methodologies and data utilized. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to inform it, at its second session, of progress made in this area;

(c) In paragraph 41 of its report, the Commission invited the Council to recommend to the Assembly that, in order to avoid duplication of reports, the reporting requested by the Assembly in resolutions 42/186 and 42/187 on the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond and on the World Commission on Environment and Development, respectively, should be discontinued.

III. INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

6. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) held two sessions in 1993. The results of the deliberations of the Committee at its first session were considered by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), which subsequently adopted its statement and transmitted it to the Commission (E/CN.17/1993/8).

7. At its second session, held in New York from 8 to 10 September 1993, IACSD continued consideration of matters related to ensuring a coordinated system-wide response to the implementation of Agenda 21 and other decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, effective division of labour and sharing of responsibilities, and collaborative arrangements for preparation of documentation for the second session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The results of the Committee's deliberations will be brought to the attention of ACC at its next session (19-20 October 1993).

IV. HIGH-LEVEL ADVISORY BOARD ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

8. In accordance with recommendations of the Conference and paragraphs 29 and 30 of Assembly resolution 47/191, the Secretary-General on 1 July 1993, announced the establishment of the High-level Advisory Board on Sustainable Development.

9. The Board will serve as a high-level source of advice for the Secretary-General in formulating policy proposals, elaborating innovative approaches and courses for action and identifying emerging issues to be brought to the attention of relevant intergovernmental bodies, particularly the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council, including the high-level segments of the sessions of these bodies, as well as to the attention of ACC.

10. In more specific terms, the Board will have the following functions:

(a) To provide high-level advice, proposals and recommendations on issues and themes to be addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development and its high-level meetings;

(b) To bring to the attention of the Secretary-General and, through him, to the relevant intergovernmental bodies, emerging problems related to sustainable development and possible ways and means for resolving them;

(c) To provide the Secretary-General and, through him, the ACC with its views on the expectations and concerns of major constituencies and groups on sustainable development issues and on the contribution of the United Nations system in addressing them;

(d) To contribute to the building of partnerships between the United Nations and the scientific, business and academic communities and major non-governmental groups;

(e) To promote knowledge and understanding of and mobilize support for United Nations activities in the area of environment and development throughout the constituencies and groups represented by its members.

11. The Secretary-General has appointed the following 20 individuals to serve on the Board for a period of two years (one Board member remains to be appointed): Mr. Bernard Chidzero (Zimbabwe), Mr. Jacques Cousteau (France), Ms. Briggitta Dahl (Sweden), Mr. Qu Geping (China), Mr. Martin Holgate (United Kingdom), Mr. Saburo Kawai (Japan), Mr. Tommy Koh (Singapore), Mr. Valentin Koptyug (Russian Federation), Mr. Bola Kuforiji-Olubi (Nigeria), Ms. Rita Levi Montalcini (Italy), Mr. Celso Lafer (Brazil), Ms. Maria de los Angelos Moreno (Mexico), Ms. Laura Novoa (Chile), Justice R. S. Pathak (India), Mr. Emil Salim (Indonesia), Mr. Klaus Schwab (Germany), Mr. Stefan Schmidheiny (Switzerland), Ms. Adele Simmons (United States), Mr. Maurice Strong (Canada) and Mr. Mostafa Tolba (Egypt).

12. The Board held its first meeting in New York on 13 and 14 September 1993. The Board appointed Bernard Chidzero as its Chairman, Briggitta Dahl as Vice-Chairman and Martin Holgate as Rapporteur.

13. After an exchange of views and a discussion with the Secretary-General the Board decided to focus its efforts initially within three broad themes:

(a) Linkages between economic, social and political development in a changing world;

(b) New approaches to finance and technology;

(c) The establishment of new partnerships between the United Nations and other bodies active in the field of sustainable development.

14. Accordingly, the Board agreed to establish three panels of its members to examine and elaborate recommendations on those issues. The first panel will be co-chaired by Messrs. K. Schwab and E. Salim, the second panel by Messrs. T. Koh and S. Schmidheiny and the third panel by Mr. J. Cousteau and Justice R. S. Pathak.

15. The Board indicated a wide range of topics that might be considered by each panel, while making it clear that the panels would be expected to focus their analysis on one or two key elements, chosen by them. The panels will work by electronic and other means of communication, would consider the various studies and initiatives being undertaken by other bodies, would consult experts and organizations known to them, when appropriate, and would report to the Board. The Board decided that its second meeting, scheduled for 17 to 22 March 1994, would be in two parts: panel meetings on 17 and 18 March and the full Board meeting on 21 and 22 March.

V. SECRETARIAT SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

16. The secretariat support for the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the High-level Advisory Board is provided by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat (see also A/48/6 (Sect. 8)).